

U.S. Census Bureau Data on the Foreign Born

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This presentation is released to inform interested parties of ongoing research and to encourage discussion of work in progress. Any views expressed are those of the authors and not necessarily those of the U.S. Census Bureau.

Overview

- Summary of U.S. Census Bureau data on the foreign born
- Data quality improvement efforts
- Snapshot of the foreign born in the U.S.

Summary of U.S. Census Bureau Data on the Foreign Born

American Community Survey (ACS)

- Implemented in 2005, data released annually
- Large sample size allows for studying small levels of geography
- Relevant questions: country of birth, U.S. citizenship status, year of naturalization, year of entry, residence one year ago, race, ethnicity, language spoken at home

Current Population Survey (CPS)

- Primary data source for U.S. labor force statistics
- Began in 1940's so allows for time series analyses
- Contains most foreign born items in ACS plus parental place of birth, reason for moving

Survey of Income and Program Participation (SIPP)

- Longitudinal survey; each panel is about four years long
- Relevant questions: whether born in U.S., citizenship status
- Topical module contains information on immigration status upon entry to the U.S., whether and when status changed to permanent resident, country of previous home

Data Quality Improvement Efforts

Year of Entry

- ACS question: “When did you come to live in the United States?”
- In 2015, further instructions added: “If you came to live in the United States more than once, print latest year.”
- Clarification sought to reduce respondent burden and improve validity of the data

2005-2014

2015+

9 When did this person come to live in the United States? *Print numbers in boxes.*
Year

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9 When did this person come to live in the United States? *If this person came to live in the United States more than once, print latest year.*
Year

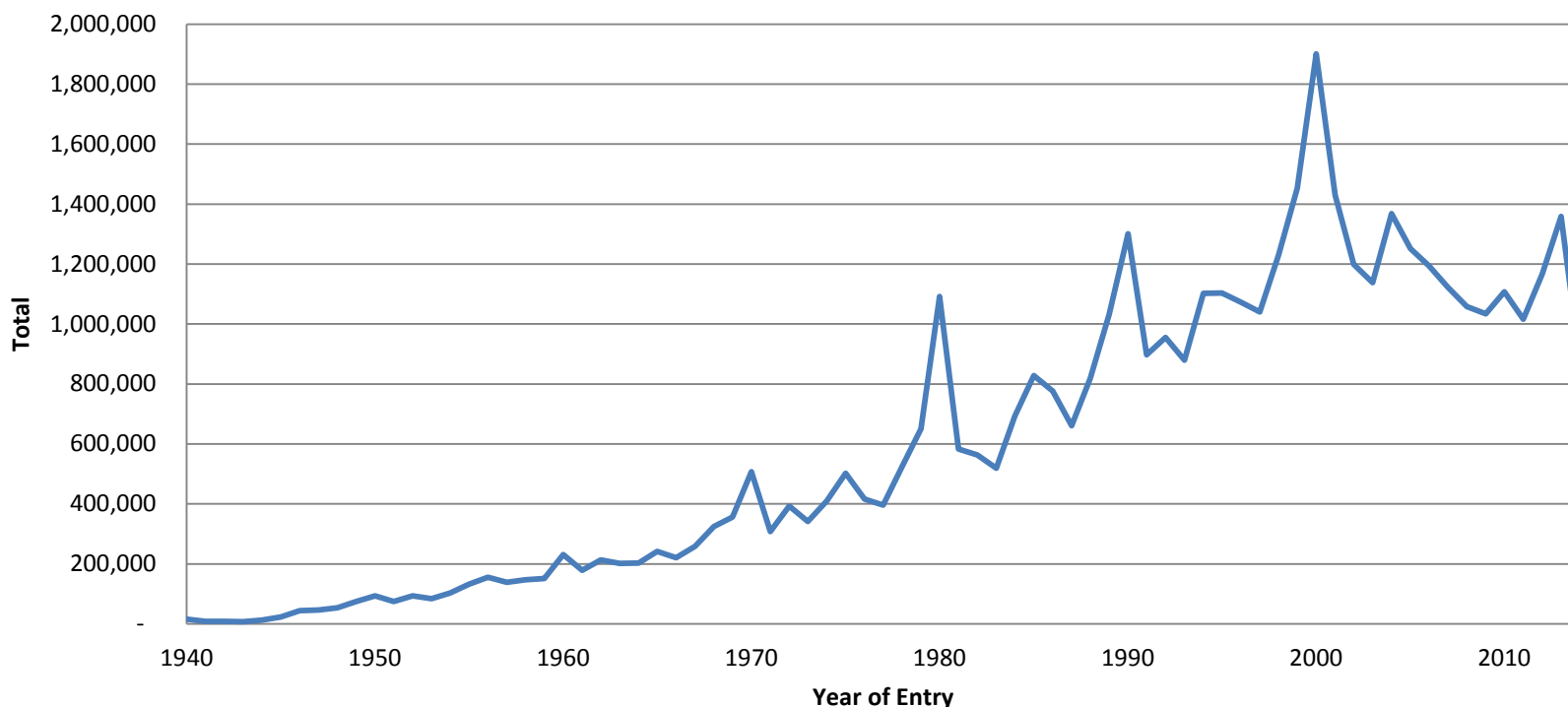
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Further Year of Entry Issues

- Heaping on years ending in zero or five suggest recall is problematic and respondents report to the nearest decade or half decade
- ACS content review found the item is medium cost on sensitivity and cognitive burden

Year of Entry Responses Heap on Years Ending in 0's and 5's

Figure 1. 2014 Year of Entry Distribution of Foreign-Born Population



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2014 American Community Survey, 1-year estimates.

Year of Entry Improvement Efforts

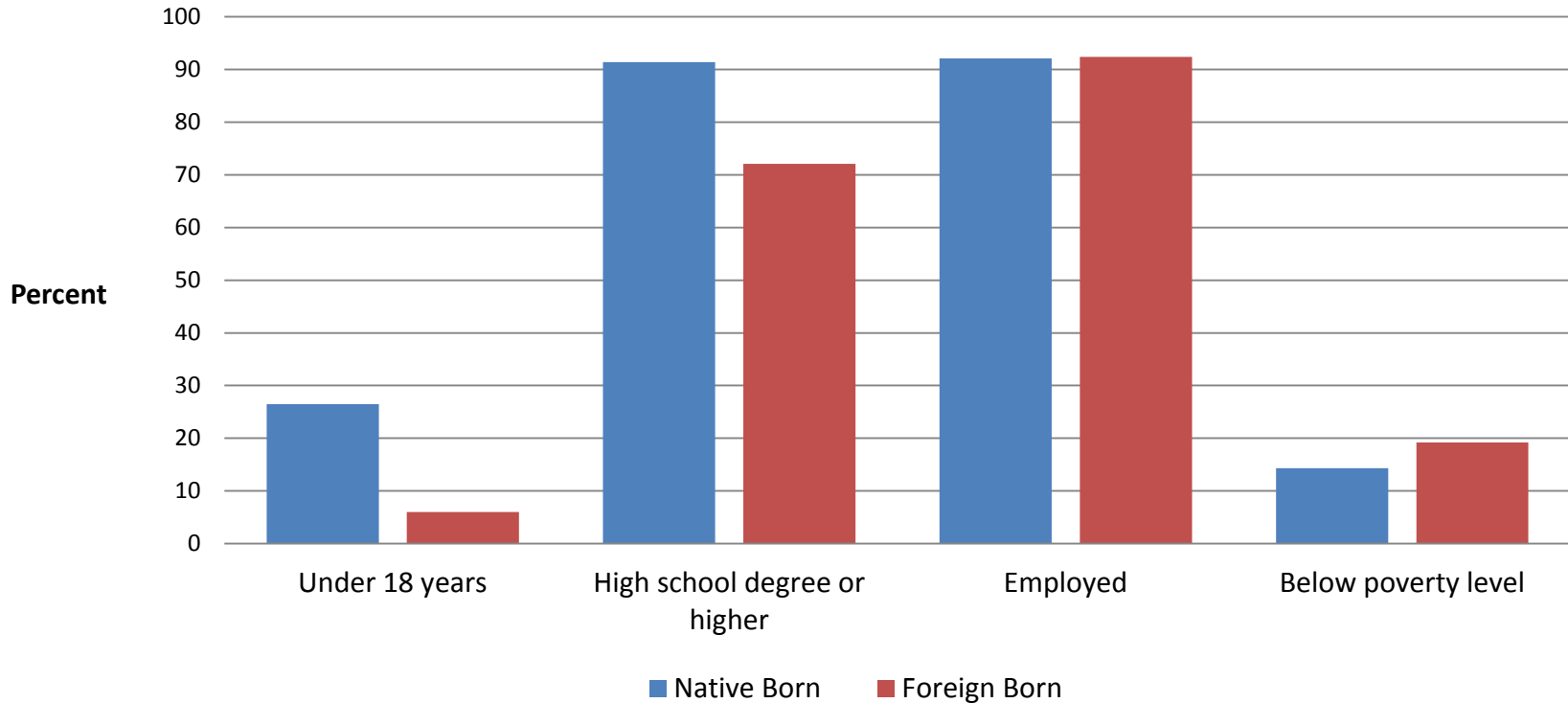
- Currently testing response categories rather than single year write-in responses
- How can we best collect year of entry data when recall is problematic and the question is sensitive?

Survey Modes and Foreign-Born Response Rates

- ACS was implemented in 2005 with mail, telephone, and in-person interview survey modes
- Internet response option added in 2013
- In 2013, foreign born were less likely than native born to respond via internet and mail
- How can we encourage higher response rates among the foreign born as we move increasingly towards internet mode?

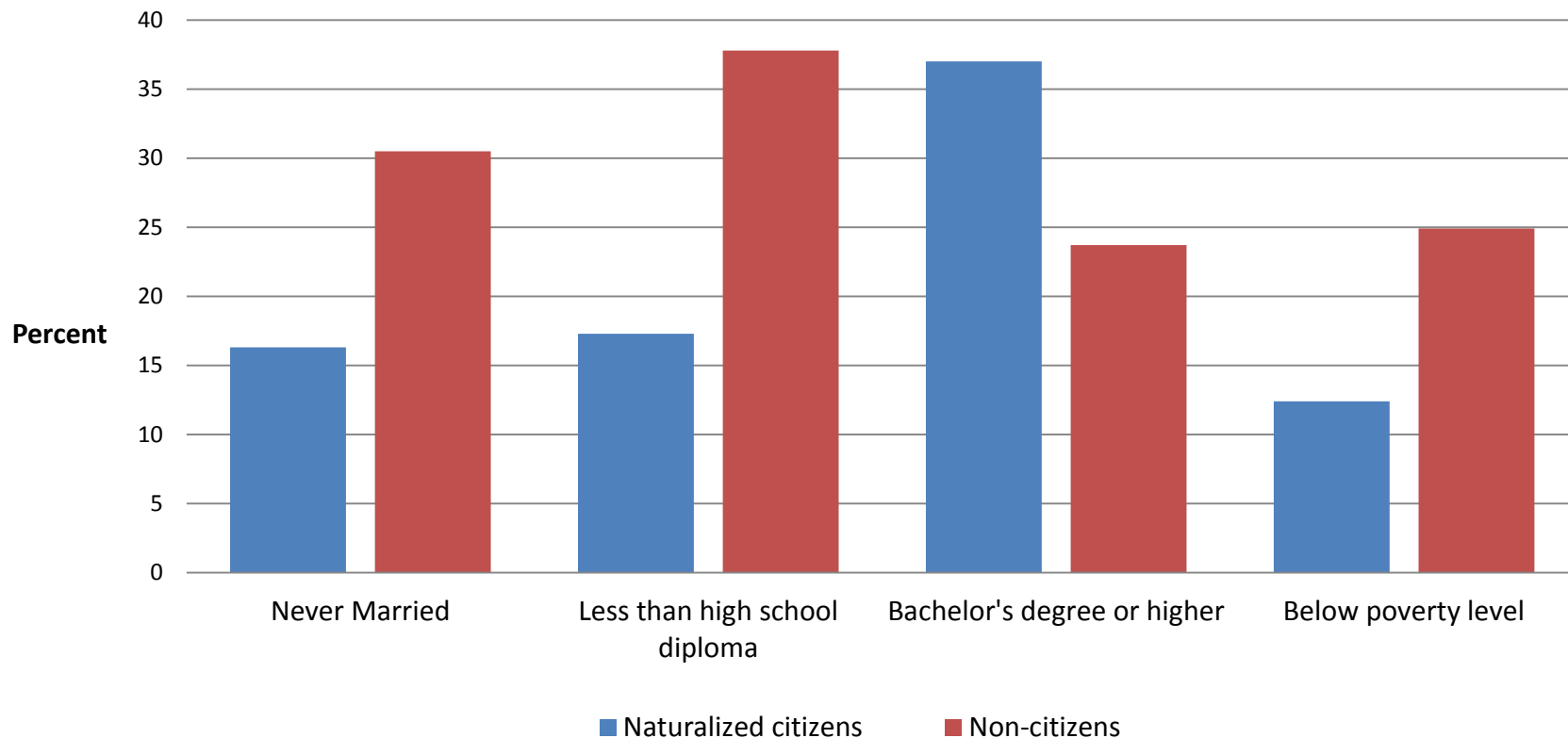
Snapshot of the Foreign Born in the U.S.

Selected Characteristics of U.S. Population by Nativity: 2013



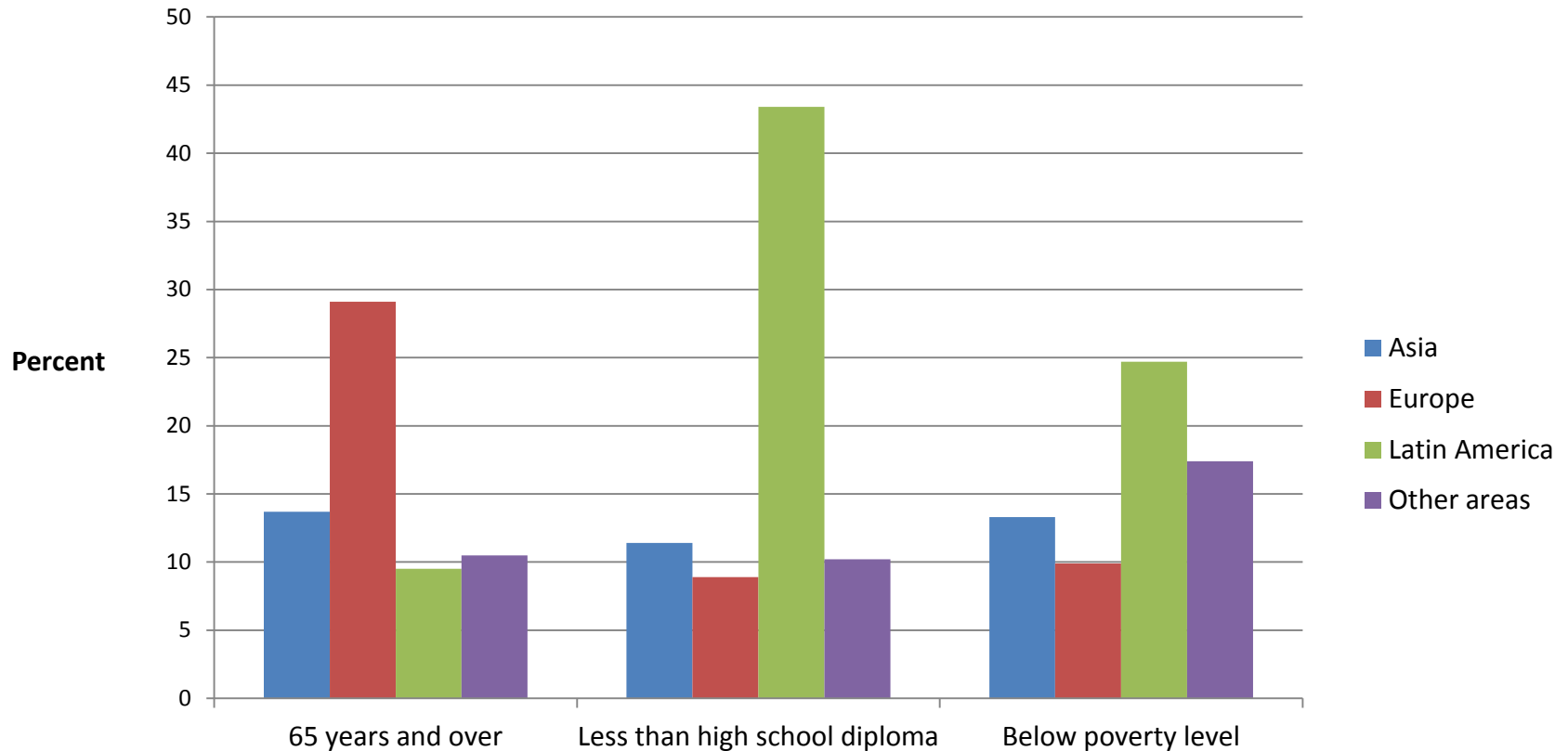
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey, Annual Social and Economic Supplement, 2013.

Selected Characteristics of the Foreign Born by Citizenship Status: 2013



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey, Annual Social and Economic Supplement, 2013.

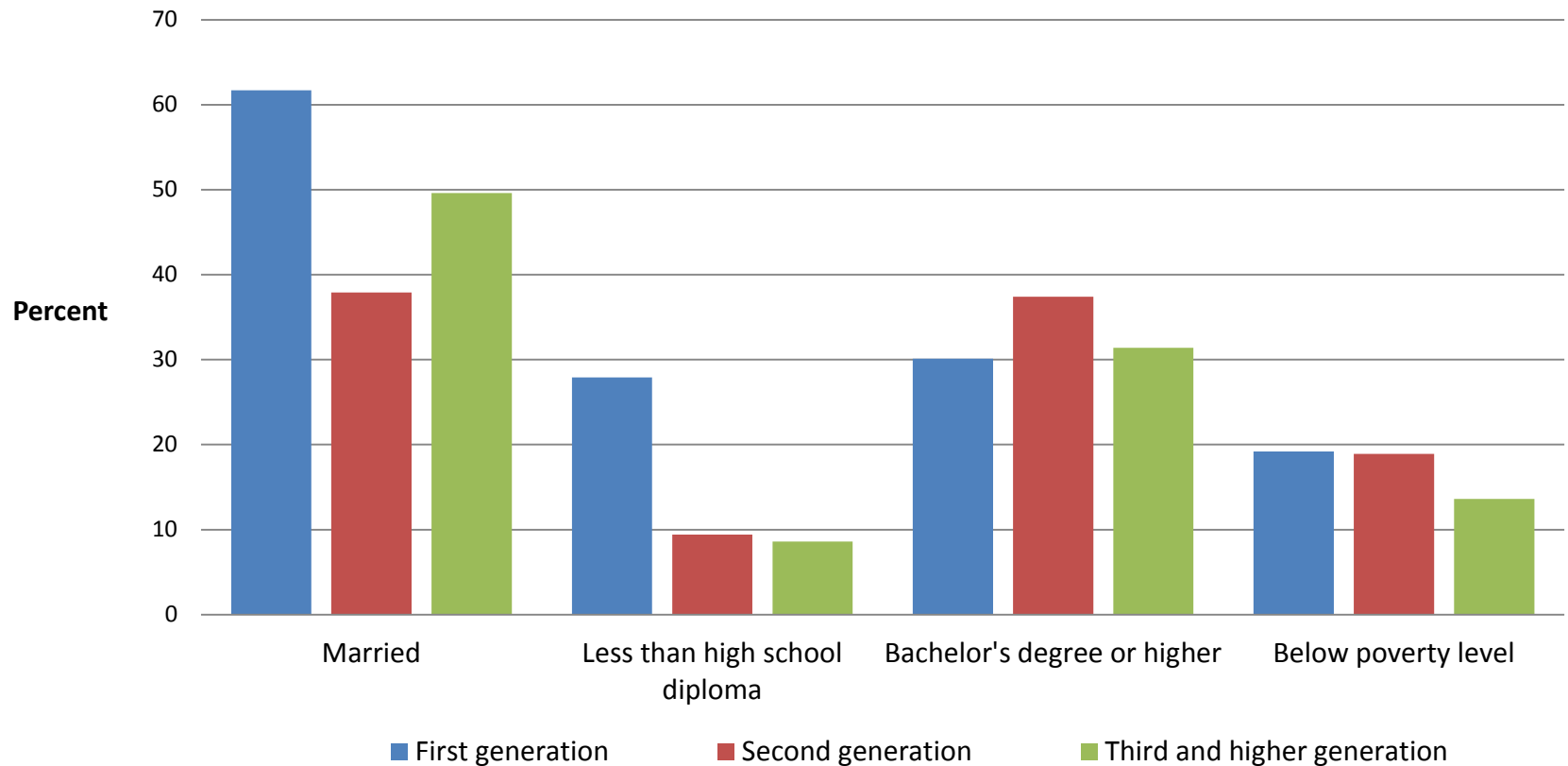
Selected Characteristics of the Foreign Born by Region of Birth: 2013



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey, Annual Social and Economic Supplement, 2013

Note: Other areas includes Northern America, Africa, and Oceania.

Selected Characteristics of U.S. Population by Generation: 2013



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey, Annual Social and Economic Supplement, 2013.

Thank you!

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Decennial Census

- Prior to 2010, the long form census questionnaire included country of birth, U.S. citizenship status, year of entry, residence five years ago
- ACS replaced the decennial census long form
- From 2010 onward, foreign-born population data are unavailable on decennial census

Citizenship and the Decennial Census

- Currently there is no citizenship question on the decennial census
- Recent U.S. Supreme Court case had implications for possibly adding citizenship to the census
- Based on the court's ruling, the U.S. Census Bureau will not be mandated to add citizenship to the 2020 Census

Citizenship and the Decennial Census

- But how should we edit citizenship if required to add it to a future census?
- ACS citizenship edit utilizes information on place of birth, year of entry, and information from other household members
- Census only contains information on race, Hispanic origin, age, and sex, so there is limited information available for respondents with missing data